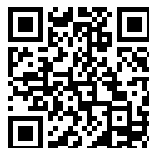

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POEMS

BY

P. A. CANON SHEEHAN, D.D.

Friday (Dinner)

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Jan. 9. 23
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POEMS

BY

Patrick Augustin
P. A. CANON SHEEHAN, D.D.

NEW YORK
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NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY AND SONS

1922

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NOTE

This volume contains a selection from all the poems left by the Author in manuscript or not previously published in book form.

ODE TRIUMPHAL

I

Sing thy triumph to the nations, O my country ! in
thy glory ;
Now thy feet are winged with victory, and swiftly
bear thee on ;
And thy children fear no longer
Shadowy past or dim hereafter,
For the winds are light with laughter
And the days are bright with song.

II

In thy bosom, O my country ! are the fairest flowers
unfolding,
Every lifted cloud of sorrow falls in flowing light on
thee,
For thy faith at length availeth,
And thy love-smile still unbroken
Sways each present sign and token
As the sea-wind sways the sea.

III

Thou art clothèd, O my country ! in the garments
of thy gladness,
And I see no armour round thee, nor the shining
light of steel,
For in peace thy ways are woven,
And thy strength is sphered in duty,
Showing the divinest beauty
That a nation can reveal.

B

I

ODE TRIUMPHAL

IV

And thy banners, O my country ! bring no war
clouds, nor the tempest—
Softly float they on the fair winds flowing from the
vault of blue,
 Flaming ancient signs and holy
 Of the brave ones gone before us,
 And the wild winds wave a chorus
To their glories sweet and true.

V

And thy future, O my country ! shall it grow in
gathering splendour ?
Shall thy martyred priests' and patriots' blood make
fertile fields for thee ?
 Keep thy memories fair and fragrant,
 And thy valour's ancient glory,
 Folded now in song and story
Long will bloom in liberty.

AN ANCIENT REBEL

I'm growing old, my hair is white,
My pulse is dull ;
I know no more the fierce delight
Of life, when full.

The frail bark of my life sweeps on
To that dark sea,
Whence murmurs the dread monotone—
Eternity !

And nothing stirs the withered leaf,
Wrinkled and sere.
I smile not, and the keenest grief
Declines a tear.

I'm dead, but for this fluttering breath,
My marble smiles
Down the long lines of conquering death
In twilight aisles.

And yet, dear God ! if yet the day
Should dawn for me
When I should catch the first faint ray
Of Liberty.

If thwart mine eyes the light did flash
From Freedom's flags
Borne in the wild, tempestuous dash
That downward drags

AN ANCIENT REBEL

The Hell-rag, black with blood—the thirst
Of Britain's hosts ;
If once mine eyes could hear the burst
That drowns their boasts.

And I could list the thrilling tramp
Of armed men
Echoed from serried camp to camp
In dell and glen.

And if the emblazoned bannerets
Of Freedom shone
Above the snowy minarets
Of Slievenamon,

I'd catch one gasp of fading breath
From Time's grim claw,
And send along the gulfs of Death
One wild, Hurrah !

THE FENIAN MOTHER

'Tis you're the full of the door, mo bhuachill,
'Tis you're the full of the door ;
But big as you are, and broad as you are,
Mo bhuachillin ban astor,
When the moon comes up o'er the valley,
And the whistle is heard in the glen,
I'll send you forth, mo bhuachaillin ban,
To muster the Fenian men.

When they called you " Captain," I thought I'd die.
And Mike put his hand to his cap ;
And I heard ould Sergeant O'Malley say
That you were the man for the gap,—
With a hand that could grapple the foeman,
And hurl him back and then,
Would summon the laggards, and the hounds on the
ditch,
To follow the Fenian men.

Think of it, think of it, O my heart !
The little, wee frame that hung
Here on my breast in the days long gone,
When I crooned " Hush-a-Bye ! " and sung
The ould, ould songs of our sireland,
Has grown like the oaks in the glen,
And he says " Halt ! " " March ! " and " Face the
foe ! "
In front of his Fenian men.

THE FENIAN MOTHER

For some said a wolf, and some said a lion,
Was hiding away in my breast.
“Lave the boy alone!” said ould Thady Ruadh,
“To his mother! She knows him best!”
An’ I did, but ’twas only a fancy
That came to me now and again,
That my boy would yet be an Irish Chief,
And leading his Fenian men.

Stop, Cauth, will you stop that cryin’, I say!
Oh, thim girls’ hearts are made
As soft as butther, as white as crame,
And as thin as an egg new laid.
But my boy he has sinews like iron,
And a hand like steel, as when
He mows a swathe, or he smites his foes,
At the head of his Fenian men.

Whisht! There’s the whistle for all the world
Just like the curlew’s call;
And the moon, it is white o’er the valley,
And the moon, it is white on the wall.
And my heart it is broken asunder,
For I know that never again
Shall I see my boy, for the Banshee wailed
For the Chief of the Fenian men.

Do I begrudge you to God, mo bhuachill,
Do I begrudge you to God?
Not if He calls you for Ireland’s sake,
To die on the brave ould sod!
To redden the grass with the life-blood
You drew from my aching breast,
I have given my boy for his country’s cause,
And God—He will see to the rest!

THE FENIAN MOTHER

But I mustn't let on ; oh, 'twould never do !

Whisht ! Here he is coming along,
Like Fionn, or Oisin, or Brian Boroimhe,

Lilting some ould, ould song.

An' I'll stifle the sob in my bosom,

An' I'll say again an' again

To my gallant boy that goes to his death

In front of his Fenian men—

Ah ! 'Tis you're the full of the door, mo bhuachill,

'Tis you're the full of the door !

But big as you are, and broad as you are,

Mo bhuachillin ban astor !

Now the moon is up o'er the valley,

And the whistle is hushed in the glen,

'Tis time to go, mo bhuachillin ban,

And *die* with your Fenian men !

SHAKE HANDS

I

Forgive, forget ! Ay, gladly we
Shake hands across the sullen sea.

And bridge the centuries that are sped
Above our unrelenting dead.

And fling a rainbow, nothing loth,
From Holyhead to Hill of Howth.

Symbolic arch, that wisely-planned
Gleams ever o'er the ocean spanned.

Forgive ! forget ! Ay, gladly we
Shake hands across the laughing sea.

II

But, first, unloose from statute-books
Your slavery's won tenter-hooks

And lift from off our rocks the heel
Spurred with revenge, and shod with steel

Bring back the victims of your hate
From Hudson to the Golden Gate.

Let the green hills of Eire sing
To all her saints' ministering.

SHAKE HANDS

And echoed down the lonely vale
Winds lisp the language of the Gael.

Let wondering eyes of boyhood see
Their gloomy, glorious history.

The grey eyes of her maidens gleam
At bardic song, or poet theme !

Lift up her manhood from the dust,
Give back the truth that springs from trust

And fearless, for they know them free,
Front the strong sun of liberty !

Drink of the wisdom fount that saves
Your allies—never more your slaves.

Content to love, but loth to serve,
A loyal grip through every nerve

That tingles not for liberty
Yet clasps your hand across the sea.

Forgive, forget ! Ay, if this be
We grip your hands across the sea.

SHALL WE FORGET

(AN ANTICIPATION)

I

Yea ! A new light is kindling in their eyes,
The blood is tingling in their rugged hands ;
Near, and more near, they see thy glories rise,
A halo round thy thorn-crowned head ; thy prize—
A rightful peerage 'mongst more honoured lands,

Queen of the myriad woes, they've rescued thee.
Lo ! They have struck the thorns from thy brow,
Replaced them with the aureola of liberty,
And charioted thee, emancipate and free,
To that high place where we behold thee now.

The heralds and the bards proclaim thy name,
The walls are rocked beneath the cannons' roar ;
The mountains tremble, as they break in flame,
And at the very echo of thy fame
The thunders grumble down the rocky shore.

The drums are beating, and the standards wave,
And bow their heads before the Sunburst's flare,
Garlands and Swinging, and the warrior's glaive,
Keen to avenge, but also keen to save,
Leaps from its scabbard at the trumpet's blare.

SHALL WE FORGET !

And breasting storms in stateliest argosies,
(As erst their fathers in the coffin-ships)
Thine exiled children cross tumultuous seas,
They chide the storm, as a too languid breeze,
Their eyes far-strained. Hosannas on their lips !

And sweet-voiced singers sing to silver lyres
All that thy wildest lovers dreamed of thee ;
And silver-tongued thy prophets kindle fires,
Long-stifled as beneath a myriad funeral pyre,
White with the ashes of dead chivalry.

II

And where was I in this thy day of pride ?
Didst think I did not love thee, even as these
Who dragged thy chariot up the steep hillside,
Hosannas thundering from the human tide,
Up to the Temple of thy Victories ?

I sought thee in the places of the past,
I lingered in the twilight and the gloom,
I haunted darkened forests, caverns vast,
I heard the feet of spectres speeding fast
And shuddering, as they fled thy Death and Doom.

I wandered on the mountains, 'midst the fern,
Kissed the rude rock, on which the Mass was said,
I saw the ghosts of gallowglass and kerne,
And the red flash from yeomen, strong and stern,
Thy mangled living, and thy martyred dead.

SHALL WE FORGET !

I tracked the ways of heroes, whose strong steel
Had carved a way to long sought liberty ;
But for some Fate that lingered to conceal
A direr Fate that beckoned to reveal
Behind their oriflamme—the gallows-tree.

I walked amongst thy dead those direful years,
Famine and fever stalking all the land,
I saw thee, Mother, and the frozen tears
In thy sad eyes had banished even fears.
Thine end—the end of all things—was at hand.

And then once more, I saw thee plunged in strife,
Thy children had arisen in their might.
“ Far worse,” they cried, “ than Death is such a Life !
Than this vile charnel-house where crime is rife
Better the Silence of Eternal Night.”

III

And now 'tis past. Long-dreamed of, long-delayed,
The day has dawned, and the far-piercing night
Of a red morn illumines hill and glade.
But shall they fling thy Calvary in the shade,
Forget its blackness in the new-born light ?

Not so, not so, with one of thine at least.
I shade mine eyes from splendours seen afar,
I turn aside from a resplendent East,
Where Night and Light their tumults long have ceased,
And fix them on a lone and pallid star

SHALL WE FORGET !

That lingers in the West—the Star of Faith
And Hope surmounting every weaker flame,
Watch the departing of that lonely wraith
That convoyed thee along the Vales of Death,
Shrouding in suffering all thy years of shame.

I close my ears to that tumultuous shout,
Not in the scorn of pride—may God forbid !
But lo ! I hear the weeping from without,
The sobs that sighed thy martyrs' graves about,
The thud of clay upon their coffin-lid.

Shall we forget ? Shall valour be unhymned,
Shall pomp and pride obliterate the Past ?
Or shall th' ensanguined records be undimmed,
As long as Banba's rugged shores are rimmed
In foam, from winds unreined, and surges vast ?

Ah, shall thy glory blind thee, and thine eyes
No longer see the martyr's crown and loss ?
steal from thy embroidered robes a prize,
(The petty theft thy greatness will despise),
Bow to thy sceptre, but I kiss thy cross.

AD PAPAM JUBILEE LEO XIII

Fifty times the white May bloom has faded,
Fifty times the rose has blushed and died,
All thy glory with thy grief is shaded,
Taught by wisdom, and by sorrow tried.

Thou art now our Pope and kindly father,
In the evening of thy golden day,
From the white ways of thy life we gather
Fruits that bear no promise of decay.

From thy lips what words of fire were shaken
From thy eyes what loving looks have shone
From thy hands what balm of blessing taken
Who hath vainly come, or empty gone?

Ever to the plaint of sorrow bending,
Be the cry from dusky slave or white,
Where the sands begin and snows are ending
Hast thou poured thy pity and thy light.

We, thy Western children stood beside thee
In the shining and the shadowed days,
Praying that no ruth nor wrong betide thee,
Filling all the temples with thy praise.

AD PAPAM JUBILEE LEO XIII

Link by link the golden chains hath bound us,
Hearts to heart, by the great laws of love,
Ever round thy throne hath danger found us,
Faithful ever did thy children prove.

But our hearts have other spheres of duty—
Home and kindred loves, and, passing all,
Green hills lifting the sublimest beauty
That e'er smiled at the Creator's call.

And we hold God's guerdon in our keeping,
We, the springing children on its breast,
Where our fathers' fathers long are sleeping,
We alone shall guard their sacred rest.

Thou art still our Pope and kindly father,
On the wisdom of thy love we lean,
To the shepherd's call the sheep still gather—
In the fold we be as we have been.

THE KISS OF CHRIST

Iscariot kissed His cheek ; His wearied feet
Were kissed by her, the woman of the street,
And He was passive. I have never read
Christ's lips approached the living or the dead

But once. From unreluctant arms He pressed
The soft, shy children to His loving breast.
Oh, youth, embraced by Meekness, be thou meek !
Oh, maid, be chaste ! Christ's Kiss is on thy cheek.

O SACRED HEART

I

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Who would not love Thee, thron'd on Mary's breast ;
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Sweet were Thy slumbers in that Home of rest.
In dewy twilight in the Syrian land,
Under the starlight on the desert sand,
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
In love-lit silence didst Thou from that home depart.

II

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Who would not love Thee, on Thy throne of pain,
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Warm from the wine-press fell Thy Blood like rain.
Crushed like the grape-vine in the hands of death,
Shuddered Thy life as failed Thy fluttering breath,
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Keen was Thine anguish under Calvary's dread
smart.

III

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Who would not love Thee enthroned in Heaven
above,
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Who would not love Thee, Fount of light and love,
Angels adore Thee in Thy halls of light,
Seraphs be-praise Thee through the day and night ;
O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
What tongue can tell the bliss Thou dost to them
impart.

O SACRED HEART

IV

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Who would not love Thee in our prisons here.

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Only the lowly know that Thou art near.

Yet, neither Calvary nor Bethlehem sweet,
Naught but that heaven where Thy blisses meet,

O Sacred Heart, O Sacred Heart,
Can so entrance those souls that even death from
Thee can't part.

QUEEN OF THE STARRY SKY

Queen of the starry sky,
Lean to our darksome earth,
Mother of God most high,
Whose lowly birth
Rescued our fallen race
From sin and death
Turn thy sweet virgin face
To our earth beneath.

Rose of the mystic bloom,
Whose golden petals bright
Sprang from the lowly tomb,
In pearls of glowing light ;
Breathe on our night of life,
Thy magic sweetness pour,
We, in our deadly strife,
Thy grace implore.

Star of the midnight gloom,
Whose pure and silver ray
Pierces beyond the tomb,
And lights the eternal day,
When in God's sunlight,
All dangers safely past,
Opens in portals bright
Our home at last.

Queen of the starry sky,
Lean to our darksome earth,
Mother of God most high,
Whose lowly birth
Rescued our fallen race
From sin and death,
Turn thy sweet virgin face
To our earth beneath.

TRIBUTES TO MARY

PROLOGUE TO THE MAGNIFICAT

O Lady Fair, a boon I ask of thee,
Ask it of thee in all humility,
 Ask it with beating heart, with pleading eye.
A leaf from thy red rose-crown? Lady, no :
One waxen petal from this lily—blow ?
 These would be dear ; but dearer still seek I.

Nay, do not frown : what claim have I to show ?
What seal doth mark me as thy child below ?
 Alas, no seal but seal of sin have I.
And yet, my soul, thou hast no stronger claim
On her who, spotless from all sin and shame,
 Might yet redeem thy life's poor travesty.

As some sad knight, the scorn of chivalry,
Unspurred, dishonoured by his peers, should flee
 To touch a lute to some fair dream that's passed
Thus I, an outcast, weave a wavering rhyme
To thee, my Empress of that far-off time
 When with thy knights hope dreamed I might be
 classed.

For oft at night, when couched but slumberless,
Tossed by the burthen of some dire distress,
 I dreamed of thy sweet face, O Lady mine :
And when thy form did glimmer and grow pale,
Thine angel dropped his consecrated veil,
 And still in sleep thy face I did divine.

TRIBUTES TO MARY

And often in the wild and windy dawn,
The sable skirts of night not yet withdrawn,
 I saw thy form shine through my lattice-bars ;
I knew it from thy beauty, shy and sweet,
From the curv'd-scythed crescent round thy feet ;
 The sun, thy cincture, and thy crest the stars.

Down through the ages, scattering as they go
Their mingled meeds of rapture and of woe,
 One dream of beauty lingers to our ken ;
One song of power, enkindling sense and soul,
Vibrates on harp, and gleams on lettered scroll
 Left by the kings of thought to weary men.

One crieth, " I love the Weeping Mother best ; "
And one, " The Babe upon the Virgin's breast ; "
 And one, " Immaculata " shouts aloud :
For dusky painters, dark-eyed poets, have limned
The beauty of my Mother, many-hymned,
 'Mid songs and sorrows of the singing crowd.

No artist yet has struck the faultless grace,
The rapt inspirement of thy childlike face,
 On that fair mount, on that fair summer eve ;
And I, the least of all the bardic train,
To consecrate my one poor gift would fain
 Thy picture fair on this frail canvas leave.

" Salem alaicon ; " and the withered lips
Brushed the soft bloom, that erstwhile did eclipse
 The Rose of Sharon in the pink-finger'd dawn
And as at breath of spring the buds travail,
So her sweet Bud did leap to burst the veil
 That by the Jordan's waters was withdrawn.

TRIBUTES TO MARY

Waved the black palms, and clapped their glist'ning
hands ;
Bubbled Nephtoa's fountain o'er the sands ;
Smiled the broad reaches of the Syrian Sea ;
Down through the Hinnim valley, clear and bright,
Pierced the long, level lances of the light,
As broke the whisper, " Whence is this to me ? "

Hushed the black palms ; and heavenward as they bent,
Closed like the hands of children reverent ;
Wavered the fountain's lily, and expired :
Sheathed the lances of the level sun,
Purpled the ocean dimples, one by one ;
Hark, 'tis the anthem ages have desired.

O Child and Prophet, thy clear, liquid notes
Soar o'er the thunder that tumultuous floats
From the starred choirs of farthest Paradise :
The Tri-une Godhead list'ning from afar,
Leans from His temple, meshed with many a star,
To hear thy music trembling through His skies.

And I, a mortal, crouching at thy feet,
Here on this hill, where night and twilight meet,
Have lost amid the future's echoings
The sweetness of the present ravishment,
As nightingale, with twilight dews besprent,
Forgets, and dreams 'tis some far bird that sings.

Now I will listen, hushed in every sense ;
I will withdraw my soul from light intense,
And wrap it round in sanctities of night :
And I will watch thy sacred syllables,
Tolled on the air like peals of fairy bells ;
And I will think, and teach thy words aright.

TRIBUTES TO MARY

Dumb as the white-haired priest that listeneth,
Reverent as the awed Elizabeth,
 Silent as stars or angels shall I be :
As when the white Host gleameth 'gainst the dawn,
Mine eyes are sealed, my very soul withdrawn—
 So shall I hearken to thy prophecy.

SONNETS

HALF-REVELATIONS

I

Last night I saw an angel's perfect wing,
Vast and resplendent, spread from pole to pole.
I marvelled that I never saw the whole
Celestial spirit in the boundless ring
Of spaces stretched beyond imagining.
There is some Fate that ever cheats the soul,
Some Hidden Hand that deals to us a dole
Of hinted glories and perfecting.

I know that angel's wing was but a form
Of cirrus curds from some vast, milky cloud.
So teaches science ; but the larger faiths
Create their own ideals uniform.
And still the lonely heart will cry aloud
Against those fragments—those too transient
wraiths.

II

And yet I think a meaning might be sought
In these half-revelations from on high.
The palimpsest of the eternal sky
Hath secrets in its starred recesses wrought.
And all that Science—all that Art has brought
In their long trains to raise and beautify
This lower life, are hidden tints to try
What loveliness is linked in human thought.

SONNETS

Each new idea hath its archetype
Of greatness or of beauty throned afar
Amid the spacious mansions of the Blest.
And when the time in God's own mind grows ripe
As flower that bursts, or rounding of a star
The form shall fade ; the type shall stand confest

III

MY SAINT

Because you never spoke, nor lifted eye,
But looked as some antique and statued saint,
Whose bosom never heaved with sad complaint,
Whilst lips would utter jest, or minstrelsy.
Because you never frowned, nor smiled on me,
But always lived beneath the mild restraint
Of unimpassioned love, though never faint,
I nestled at thy feet, and worshipped thee.

Saint as thou art, there is a human tie
Linking my soul to thine, but what it is
I must not tell. The larger ecstasy
Would be profaned by speech as full as his,
Who writes too loud, too passionately.
Such vehemence true love doth never miss

SONNETS

IV

STATUE AND SOUL

“ The marble wastes ; the statue grows apace ! ”
So said the greatest Master of his art ;
Had he some hidden meaning to impart,
Some lesson that he fain would teach his race ?
The Poet's hidden thoughts 'tis hard to trace ;
In signs too fugitive they will depart
And leave to future dreamers' mind and heart
To sift the precious from the commonplace.

“ The marble wastes ! ” The crumbling vesture falls
As the white spirit to full stature grows,
And casts the slough of the frail flesh it wears.
“ The statue grows ! ” The stricken quarried walls
The semblance of a perfect soul disclose
Silent, as waiting from th' eternal years.

SONNETS

V

THE MONK'S ALTAR

I saw a monk within his lonely cell.
The wall, the floor, the very bed was bare ;
His head was crowned with one faint fringe of
hair ;
Outside his window was a painted hell.
Fool, no ! But ever from his hand there fell
To-day, and yesterday, and every day whilst there
Some remnant of the vanities men wear
Into an altar-flame that burned full well.

And all were dust and ashes in a trice—
Wealth, fame, power, love, ambition, and desire—
A holocaust before the Godhead's face.
At last, he burst its ribbed fortalice,
And flung his bleeding heart upon the pyre.
It flamed aloft—a star of chrysoprase.

SONNETS

VI

CAST DOWN

Dear, do not wake that virginal to-night
For I am weary, and my senses sleep
In a Lethean slumber that doth keep
My spirit locked from music, as from light.
A poet swept me in his heavenward flight
Far, far beyond the earth—his cloudy steep,
Where he trod light as air, but I did weep
For my own impotence, and wretched plight.

For all my wings of fancy wavering fell,
And closed in terror of the escarped cloud.
I drew my hand from his—he soared aloft,
And I am here, but how I cannot tell.
Dear, do not wake that virginal to-night—
Steep it in silence, slumberous and soft.

SONNETS

VII

A MODERN BABEL

' Build on, build ever ! ' such the hopeful cry
Cheering the weary Titans at their toil
Of rearing a proud palace on the soil
Whose spires and turrets should all Time defy.
" Build on, build ever ! till the flag shall fly
From highest battlement, and your foes recoil
Before those virile energies that foil
The hosts that dare to thwart humanity."

" Build on, build ever ! on liberated ground
By thunder undismayed, or bolt, or levin.
Build for the promise of a second birth."
The Titans built in blindness, and they found
They'd undermined the very walls of Heaven
To trace a puny kraal upon their earth,

SONNETS

VIII

A WISH

Fate, would'st thou give me one great boon at last ?
I do not ask for large ancestral rights,
The mouldering harvest of an hundred fights,
Or palsied presents from a bloodless past.
That which I imprecate thou ever hast
Locked from pursuers of the low delights,
But flung to watchers of the sleepless nights—
The elect, the apart, as thou hast wisely classed.

Ere yet my faculties and senses droop
Beneath the burden of the later years,
Make me, altho' to human eyes unseen,
One of the separate and timeless group
Who walked with tranquil eye, unfilmed of fears
The cold, cloud-summits of the empyrean.

SONNETS

IX

SERENITY

One gift, one attribute of gods I claimed
And sought by high endeavourings to reach,
And stretched vain hands suppliant to beseech—
Serenity, the unhuman gift is named.
I know not whether we, as mortals framed,
Must learn the lessons passions ever teach,
Or be content to wrap in human speech
The word, but not the gift, the gods have claimed.

If this be so, is there no subtle charm
For passion, of defeated gods no cry
Despairful, as they plunged the abysmal deep?
Forth from their whirring wings in swift alarm
Broke the envenomed warning, and—the lie
“Eternal calm would be eternal sleep.”

SONNETS

X

PALLIDA MORS

You cannot frighten me ! I know full well
The lines of life are narrowing in view,
And from the dark and gloomy avenue
Phantoms leap forth to ruin, or repel.
Phantoms of fears that ever with me dwell,
And all my hopes persistently pursue,
Ghosts of regrets for hours I sadly rue,
Which now in cold revenge remorse compel.

Yet is my mind unshaken on its throne,
My heart beats steady as the pendulum
Of Time that swings although its force is spent.
Look, for the shadows have already flown,
The heralds of Eternity have come,
The Dawn is whitening all the firmament.

SONNETS

XI

WRECKED

The lighthouse flash was half-choked in the mist,
And faint and far from out the gathering gloom
Came ever and anon the fogbell's boom
To warn mariners from the perilous tryst
Where rocks would mar what seas and storms had
missed

And hurry ships and sailors to a tomb
Where never thwart the wide and watery womb
Winds, seas, and waves to weave their wiles desist.

Sudden a rocket pierced the vaporous skies,
There was the grinding of a torn keel,
Then a great darkness swallowed up the night.
Shrill voices rose ; pierced with despairing cries
The palsied keeper standing near the wheel
Gasping his spasms of intermittent light.

SONNETS

XII

DISILLUSION

I dreamed, and dreamed, that I could ever dream
And watch the sweet face of the sleeping sea
Or thrill to unimagined ecstasy
When from the billows was blown back the stream
And smoke beneath the rainbow domes that gleam
Irised and trembling as the breakers flee.
I said, the old sea-sounds will bring to me
Whate'er of happiness in this world I deem.

And then I came with wide, expectant eyes,
That fell upon the lone and sad expanse,
A wilderness that stretched from Cape to Cape.
I asked myself, was mine some wild surmise
Etherealised as in a moonlight trance—
This dumb, and cold, and irresponsible shape.

SONNETS

XIII

Two spirits on the midnight wind-blasts drave
And swept the earth with broad and falchioned
brands,

The lightning gleaming from their spectral hands
Showed the red ichor dripping from each glaive.

An aged monk, tossed on his mattress-grave:

And moaned: "There comes to me some high
commands

From the far shores and bourns of spirit-lands
To lift my feeble voice, and stammer: Save!"

And lo! the night winds ceased. The tempest
swooned

Away in silence. And beside his bed,

Their garments by the dawn-winds gently swayed,
Two spirits stood. One said: "Thou saint, dost
wound

The heart of Justice ere its bolts are sped.

But thou shalt be the martyr. We've obeyed!'

SONNETS

XIV

I thought that Isis wore a mystic veil,
Which no profane, or curious hand hath raised.
To-day before her shrine I stood amazed,
For there I saw a face, as marble pale,
And yet no visor-mask of scaled mail
Could shroud from human eye a spirit dazed
As that appalled look that upward gazed
Stricken as one should ask : Shall Death prevail ?

Nature uplifts her veil to us in vain.
Her cold and stony face for ever asks
Questions that never have an answer brought.
Let men for ever all their senses strain
She gives as guerdon for their weary tasks—
Silence, and incommunicable thought.

SONNETS

XV

Unheard, unechoed by the ears of men
There is a music doth appeal to me,
A chorus of transcendent melody,
Like a sea pausing, and coming once again.
Oh ! that I could with voice, or word, or pen,
Transfix those rapturous sounds before they flee,
And keep for ever in my memory
Those chords divine beyond all human ken.

“ Look thou on me ! ” the soul-chords seem to say :
“ On me ! ” “ On me ! ” echo all the rest,
As for a soul an angel casting lots.
And faint and far as at the close of day,
Arise like winds from out the burning west,
The music of unutterable thoughts.

SONNETS

XVI

Here on an easel in the twilight lies
A dream within a dream of that sweet Face
That loomed upon his captors with such grace
The Roman Consul stared in blank surprise.
Yet from the lightning of these fallen eyes
He turns aside, whilst down the steep staircase
Glided a woman, towards the Consul's place,
White with the pallor of a wild surmise.

She bade her lord relent ; " For this," she said,
" This Man, whose gracious dignity o'erawes
Even you Roman soldiers, He is just
For I have dreamed a dream upon my bed,
And seen what might make even you to pause,
Great as you are, a woman's instinct trust ! "

SONNETS

XVII

And lo ! a woman's instinct sculptured this ;
From whitest marble carved this effigy !
Of Christ's sweet Face within His Agony,
Spotless e'en where hath pressed the Judas-Kiss.
Not one dear line or feature doth she miss,
Humility combines with majesty—
Hardly one hint of that sad tragedy,
That ushered in the Christ's eternal bliss.

O hands, that laboured on this work of love,
Are ye not washed in that resplendent stream
That issued from the sacred Head incised
With those sharp Thorns ? O brooding Dove,
Whose genius wrought this dream within a dream,
Rest softly on the breast of thy dear Christ !

SONNETS

XVIII

INTERCHANGE

I asked the mountain : " Why art thou so dark ? "
The mountain answered : Ask the passing cloud !
I asked the mighty sea, that thundered loud,
" Why art thou changeful ? " And it bade me mark
The interchanging sky, now bright, now stark,
And stiff as corpse within its coffin shroud.
I asked the weeping sky : Why hath it bowed
So low, it stifles even the singing lark.

And the sky answered : Ask the valleys low
Whence fog, and mists, and clouds, and rain arise.
But I stopped there. My reason could not range
Effect and Cause in one fair, cosmic flow.
I read within the Iris of its eyes—
Nature is but eternal interchange.

XMAS EVE

THE YEAR IS DYING

I

Over the wide flats of the mere
A white bird wavered, slowly winging ;
The Spirit of the dying year
Seemed singing to my hidden ear,
From out the abbey cloisters near
The song came wearily and drear,
And this—the burthen of the singing :

Some see the tender blade appear who ne'er will see
the golden grain,
Some see the crescent moon arise who ne'er will see
the narrowing wane,
Some hear the angel's bell at dawn who ne'er will
hear the vesper chime,
Some tremble at a passing thought, and, thinking
still, they pass from time.

II

Beyond the mere, across the wold,
The white bird still went slowly winging ;
The mists move inward, grey and cold,
And, round the ruined abbey rolled,
Their silver wings in silence fold,
And, softly sighing, comes the singing :

XMAS EVE

Yes, Love abideth for ever in angels' tears,
Sorrowing silently over our faulty years ;
Hope cometh over the waters from yon blue shore
With peace and promise of welcome for evermore.
Let us go with a faith unfailing in mercy's sway,
When the bud and the blossom of life have passed
away ;
Let us take the shadowless veil from Death's dark
hand,
And hide our souls from the light of a sinful land

III

Afar into the distant grey
The faint white bird was dimly winging ;
The shadows of the dying day
Over the white hills moved away,
And close with Death the Old Year lay,
While blithely came the voice's singing :

Banish, human hearts, your sadness
Ere the coming year be born ;
Hymn your canticles of gladness
To the golden-girdled morn ;
Be your praises upward borne,
Let the purple hills rejoice,
And the vales no longer mourn
For the welcome of His voice.
On this night the Virgin holy
Brought the loving One to light,
On this night the Virgin lowly
Brought the tidings of delight.
Now the silver veil is broken
And the vision comes again,

XMAS EVE

For the prophet's words are spoken,
Full of gladness, full of pain ;
All the links of love are tightened
Through the hearts of humankind,
All the lifted souls are whitened,
And the mists are swept behind.
See the glory comes upon us—
Comes as sunlight thro' the rain—
'Twas a morning full of promise,
'Tis an evening full of gain.

THE MIDNIGHT SYNOD

I

Neither by symbol flashed, nor secret sign,
Nor word of mouth, nor Courier, nor page,
Was the great synod of the monks convened.
But at the Matins of the midnight hour,
Or morning sacrifice, or evensong,
In whispered accents was the message sent
To Abbot, Prior, or yet more frequently
To humble brother in the Convent grounds
Pruning or weeding with eyes bent to earth,
Or flashed along the ranks of Cherubim.
And this the import. On a certain night
Moonless, and just when the great clock should chime
The midhour 'twixt the twilight and the dawn
The brethren of all the convents round
Sainted Lismore ; the thousand monks that prayed
Alone upon the heights, or in the silent cells
That thronged the river broadening to the sea
Should meet in midnight synod at the place
Where the great river parts with all the sweets
Garnered from shrub, and flower, and thymy bank
And mingled with the salt and brackish tide
That sweeps to honeyed haunts from barren sea.
For the great spirit of the past had died—
Meekness, and the gentle shade of Charity ;
And in their place Hell's dark usurper came
And blent the fierce and angry flame of hate
With the most pure and holy flame of love.
Monks, who to crush the craving of the flesh
Made of themselves a wan and ribbed cage,

THE MIDNIGHT SYNOD

Nurtured fierce fires of hate and jealousy,
And their great hearts were living coals of fire
That shone through all the fissures of the flesh,
And all about a Saschal date, a secret sign,
A controverted text or line that built
Barriers more stiff than brass to break.
In the far schools a gentle war was waged,
Platonic, meek, as at the Academe,
And lo ! its echo in the Irish schools
Thundered and volleyed with hot Celtic hate :
The snows did melt along the Appennines,
And our dear vales were yellow with the flood.

II

'Twas autumn-time. The forest leaves put on
Their sad consumptive beauty before Death,
Or flashed with all the riot of despair
Their rich, fantastic garments of distress,
As some sad prisoner, fronting the high pyre
Is clad in fiery colours of despair,
To mock, or pressaged hues of living flamed
Yellow and red and black and saffron dyed,
To the pale Autumn, ere its gentle death
Laid meekly by its robes of lustrous green
And meekly, yet with gesture of despair,
Suffered the stabbing frosts and burning dens
To deck it for the coming holocaust.
'Twas midnight, and that autumn night was dark
As the most gross and spongy air of Hell.
The autumn night was still, but for the stir
Of restless bird amongst the sycamores
And the faint flash of oars along the wave.
That bore the silent monks unto the sea.

THE MIDNIGHT SYNOD

They did not speak, for no man rightly knew
Whether his neighbour was a friend or foe,
And some dread fear haunted and 'wilder'd them
Of the dread Synod on the midnight sea.
But when their coracles frail and light
Burst into the wild and drear expanse
Where Ocean in its arbitrary mood
Hath torn the teeming earth, and covered it
With the hoarse roar of shoaling surge and sea
At some dim squall, felt but never seen.
A thousand torches stabbed the thick'ning night
And flashed their ruddy splendours on the sea
And made a rosy light in grim Rhincrew
And coloured all the sleeping leaves with blood.

LIGHT ON THE SEA

Light on the sea ! Light on the sea !

Breaketh the morning silently.

The thin, faint line is trailed across the track
And neither blackening wind, nor white sea-wrack

Breaks the soft shimmer curling restlessly
Light on the sea ! Light on the sea !

Light on the sea ! Light on the sea

And the night sinking noiselessly.

Far on the dim sealine a lonely ship
Hovers in fear where far horizons dip

Beneath a night that quenches noiselessly
Light on the sea ! Light on the sea !

Light on the sea ! Light on the sea

And a great hope doth break on me

That as at dawn, so in the nearing dark
Thy beams may wash around my labouring barque

So that beneath the feet of Death I see
Light on the sea ! Light on the sea !

THE CRY OF THE CURLEWS

A lonely whitewashed cottage
Under a sandy cliff ;
I, a child, and my cradle
The thwarts of the fisher's skiff.
Dark was the night without,
The winds swept over the lea
The cry of the curlews calling,
And the weary wash of the sea.

Sea-swallows nestled above us
Silent ; but all night long
Sleepless the cold waves gathered,
Pouring to night their song.
They sang alone in the darkness,
Like hooded monks in choir,
And the long, lone beach was lighted
With flames of the white sea-fire.

I heard the fret of the shingle
Teased by the wanton wave,
And the deep, low boom of the thunder,
In the dripping ocean-cave.
But I heeded not fret nor thunder,
Nor the crack of the wild wind's whips,
For the mother's face bent o'er me,
And the warmth of a sister's lips.

Years have sped since my childhood,
And all the visions of yore
Passed like the spirits of dreamland,
Haunting a ghostly shore.
Yet in the night or twilight
Cometh a sound to me—
The cry of the curlews calling,
And the weary wash of the sea.

THE CRY OF THE CURLEWS

Yestreen I watched in my manhood
There where the cottage stood,
Under the nests of the swallows
Beside the ocean flood.
Gone is the whitewashed cabin,
And the fisher's humble skiff,
And a low mound, weedy and grass-grown,
Is all of the stately cliff.

And there in the twilight of fancy
Did I trace my love's eclipse—
The vision that bent above me,
The thrill of a sister's lips.
God! Thou art just, and somewhere
In Thy myriad mansions blest,
Mother and sister are watching
The face they once caressed.

For death is only a shadow
Cast by Thy holy love,
As the nest of her young is darkened
By the wings of the hov'ring dove.
Swifter and swifter downwards
Thy Spirit swoops to us,
Couched in the warmth of His shadow,
Winged multitudinous.

Yestreen I watched in my manhood,
To-day my hair is white ;
I hear the eternal surges
Beat in the nearing night.
But even in Heaven I'll summon
From cells of memory
The cry of the curlews calling,
And the weary wash of the sea.

BLOW, TEMPESTS, BLOW !

Blow, tempests, blow !
And speed your legions through the hollow woods,
And people all the mighty solitudes,
Where silence stalks with Spirits, to and fro.

Shake, forests, shake !
Beneath the fierce and ever-maddening stress
Of wild autumnal hurricanes that press
Through every shivering bough and hollow brake.

Fall, breakers, fall !
And shiver all your splendours, as a cup,
Waved to and fro by those who sing and sup,
Is shattered from the hand of some high Bacchanal.

Shine, starlets, shine !
Down through the pulseless ether send your light,
And touch the eyes and souls of men, whose sight
Covets a splendour that is all Divine.

Dream, brothers, dream !
Of high and holy things beyond your ken ;
Dream on, like saints upon their clouds, and then
Descend and pass along the silent stream !

White breakers on a moonlight beach,
The lisp and lilt of human speech ;
The children's laughter, and the call
At midnight of my waterfall

BLOW, TEMPESTS, BLOW!

The thunder in the blackened sky,
The moan of wounded hearts ; the cry
Half stifled where a tear is hid,
The clay upon the coffin-lid.

How doth it end ? On sea and land
Tiptoed I see the Angel stand.
One trumpet-blast—Man's second birth
And silence on the dispeopled earth.

What then imports this planet-moth ?
The rhapsodies of man, the mite ?
Now sunk in silences, for both
Are merged into the Infinite

The tide swept up, and the tide swept down
And washed the piers of Ellicetown.

The grey old timbers where hung the shreds
Of weeds, that were washed from the ocean beds.

And there lay the sands, so firm and grey
Neath the lighthouse gleaming across the bay.

The day departed ; and down came night
And a shadow darker swept up the height.

Silent and black as a seaborne bier
Of a Sea King fallen on fields of fear.

Nor the flap of sail, nor the throb of oar
Haunted the air, or vexed the shore.

BLOW, TEMPESTS, BLOW !

But there in the tide of the narrow bight
Swung the vast bier in the moonless night.

Men saw it, and said with a shuddering dread
'Tis the hearse of the cursed and unburied dead.

And if all the sea was a glittering white
Of seals ; and if fish choked up the bight,

Not a boat would be launched, not even a sail
Would curve neath the breath of the welcome gale.

But women would cross themselves and men
Would shake their foreheads and say Amen—

And if the moon shone with her sickly light
Across the waves of the narrow bight,

'Twould strike the deck of the phantom ship,
The cold dead face and the sneering lip.

SISTER TO SISTER

I

Have you not scorned in vain ?
Who stands now brighter for silence or false pro-
claiming
The Pharisee's prayer ?
Whose quiv'ring heart gives coward proof to the
world's shaming
In baffled despair ?
Say, have you scorned in vain !

II

Have you not scourged in vain ?
Had the tiger thirsting for blood such feast of glad-
ness,
Such revel of death ?
Yet the crimsoned earth gives heroes to flame thy
madness
With Liberty's breath.
Say, have you scourged in vain !

III

Have you not cursed in vain ?
For me, the world's fair homage with gift of morning,
And promise of day ;
For you—the leper of nations—come winds of war-
ning.
Can vengeance delay ?
Say, have you cursed in vain !

TRANSPosed

If Youth were Age, and Age were Youth,
Each might subserve the other's gain,
For Youth prefers the chaff to truth
And soulless Age the garnered grain.

If Youth were Age, then Age in sooth
Hath limped, or donned the leaden soles ;
If Age were Youth, where then were ruth—
The wisdom that desire controls.

No ! Youth is Youth, and Age is Age,
To each its pleasures and its spoils ;
Loves that torment—hopes that assuage,
And Death the end of dreams and toils.

Both say : The sum of all that's known
Neath summer sun, or winter's noon ;
From ice-bound pole to torrid zone
Is this : Life passeth all too soon !

A GAME OF CHESS

A square of black, and a square of white,
And they call them, Nights and Days ;
Black, where a star withdraws its light,
White, where he sheds his rays.
And the fray goes merrily on, without
Weapons of pen or sword,
And the mites move in, and the mites move out,—
Pawns on the chequered board.

The demiurge, Michael (for God's afar)
Leans on his mighty hand
His brow, that is ruffled with many a scar
Of thought, and of high command.
His grim antagonist studies the game,
As when, on the desert rocks,
He studied the Face without sin or shame,
And the dew on the auburn locks.

There are knights to unhorse, and castles to storm,
And Queens to uncrown and dethrone,
And the piles of the dead and defeated form
The prizes each claims as his own.
But the duellists fight, without word or shout,
Or shadow of noise or sound,
And the mites move in, and the mites move out ;
For the world's a merry-go-round.

Ah ! a merry-go-round—a jest and a song,
And the laughter of children at play,
And the hours stretch out, so sunny and long,
And Life is a summer day—

A GAME OF CHESS

But that now and again a drifted cloud,
Like the pass of a wizard's hand,
Darkens the sunshine, dapples the crowd,
And makes night over the land.

Once and again o'er the murmurous mites,
As a wave o'er slanting deck,
A dark hand sweeps, as to claim its rights,
And a mocking voice cries, "Check!"
And then there's a pause, and a little rout,
And a cry for a greater claim,
And the mites move in, and the mites move out,
For Life is a Maypole game.

Alas! and how will it end? I trow
'Tis a weary game at the best,
And the odds lean on to the left somehow,
And the Angel's brow's depressed.
And the players would fling it up long ago,
But for the prize at stake,
And Satan will never his chances forego,
Nor Michael his post forsake.

But the pitiful thing is the victim's greed
For their bubbles, and beads of glass.
They are deaf to the fight, nor ever heed
The hands that over them pass:
The hand of white that trembles with doubt,
The black that grasps its chance,
And the mites move in, and the mites move out,
And Life is a Morris-dance.

KLEIST AND FRAU VOGEL

There was no love between this man and her
Only one link that spiked with sorrow drave
Down by the lake which storms never stir
Two worn spirits to a watery grave.

Hopeless and poor—This was the Poet's fate.
Hopelessly stricken by some fell disease
This was her lot. And where's the sage can state
Which had the larger right to life's surcease?

One says that they were cowards. That no woe
From out the high God's hands could justify
That self-effacement which such spirits know
The price and guerdon of Tranquillity.

Judge not! A mystery is shrouded here.
Leave them alone to everlasting rest :
A painted petal, or a salted tear,—
The dead are heirs to some such sad bequest.

WHERE MEN WORSHIP

I saw you, O my Sister, at the ball,
A muskrose nestled in your raven hair,
I saw you sweep the music-haunted hall,
And you were queen, yet pure as you were fair.
But, Sister mine, I did not love you there.

I saw you, O my Sister, on the pier,
You walked as empress of that little world,
For you, for you alone, that fanfare clear
From rock to sea, from sea to rock was hurled.
But, Sister mine, I did not seek you there.

I saw, O my Sister, at the sea
The night hung low, and silver were the stars,
I saw them tremble in mad jealousy,
Your eyes were mirrored there beneath the bars.
But, Sister mine, I did not worship there !

I saw you, Sister, in the crowded room,
Men worshipped you for face, or mien, or voice.
Sudden there shot across the lights a gloom,
And a hand choked me as I cried, Rejoice !
Ay, Sister mine, I could not glory there.

I saw, O my Sister, by the hearth
A flame leaped up, and crimsoned all your face,
And rubied too the dainty little birth,
That nestled in your breast with such sweet grace.
Ah, Sister mine, I think I worshipped there.

I saw you, Sister, by the bed of Death.
Dusk were your robes, and tear-swol'n were your
eyes,
I thought I heard the dead with one last breath
Bless you, and beckon to the opened skies.
Ah, Sister mine, I think I loved you there !

FANTASIES

I—NATURA VICTRIX

He spilt sea-pearls upon the sand,
He grasped me in his hollow hand ;
He said : I am thy slave ! Command !

The genii of the sea and sky
With every whim of mine comply,
They are my slaves. But thine, am I.

I can uncurve the hollow wave,
And smooth to silk where tempests drave,
Command me, for I am thy slave.

But I reluctant cried : Nay ! Nay !
Let Nature hold her ancient sway
And rule her regal waterway.

For who am I to tempt her so.
Despite her, make her tempests blow
Or stem her currents' underflow ?

She knows her bounds ; she knows her laws ;
Nor shall I challenge her because
Her fury from her love she draws.

She rules with right her watersphere
She kindles love ; she kindles fear ;
Naiad or Neptune everywhere.

He flung the salt sea on the sands ;
He smote me with his hollow hands ;
Thou slave, he cried, go, hug thy bands.

FANTASIES—II

I drew my sword from out its sheath,
I flung the scabbard there beneath,
It glittered on the purple heath.

And all the elf-lights sparkling shone,
The two-faced, two-edged blade upon,
Flashed for a moment, and were gone.

And sudden roared a maddened flood,
I hacked and hewed it as I stood,
Till blade and gauntlet both were blood.

And then it vanished quite, until
The flood was but a rippling rill,
Yearning its sweetness to distil.

I dipped the blade with just a prayer,
I ran it through my streaming hair,
But no ! the ill-starred stain was there.

I hung it in our Lady's shrine,
I begged by Heaven and Babe Divine
The brand be cleansed, and yet be mine.

Ah no ! to my half-maddened mind
It seemed the more incarnadined,
More black for all it left behind.

I called a little child, and lo !
I bade him breathe, breathe soft and blow,
The crimson was a silvered snow.

I put the brand within its sheath.
I hung it where the breezes breathe,
It points to one small grave beneath.

FANTASIES—III

I saw the sun shine at the pole,
I saw the rivers backwards roll,
I saw a man without a soul.

And of the three, which was the worst ?
I shuddered when I saw the first,
Feared I the next ; the third I cursed.

The sun was green ; the ice-floes green,
And ghastly in the moonlight sheen
A white bear capped the dismal scene.

It mouthed its cub with hot, red lips,
The cub was dead. And downward dips
The green sun in a black eclipse.

And cursing, struggling, maddened swirled,
In vortices of ruin hurled,
The river's ice-floes swept a ruined world.

In their retreat the waters choked,
A myriad dying monsters croaked,
The earth with putrid corpses soaked.

And yet I did not curse, but when
I saw amid the ranks of men
What was beyond all human ken.

A monster possible, but yet
Amongst a myriad fears unmet,
A friend in an idol set.

FANTASIES

A white clay image rudely framed,
Amongst God's creatures yet unnamed,
A thing by mind and law untamed.

And can it be ? and shall it be ?
Will God forefend the mystery ?
Lest earth should burst in agony.

The polar sun still rides on high .
The river courses now are dry :
The earth has withered : the man is nigh.

FANTASIES—IV

In the apple-blossoms I hid my face ;
I never dreamed I could find a trace
Of aught but gentle and tender grace

Of bud and leaf ; and the subtle scent
Of clove and musk ; and a music sent
From the stops of some windblown instrument.

But swift sped by a honey bee,
Brown and hairy and gold was he,
A well-filled aerial argosy.

And as he passed, I was swift aware
Of a keen, half-angry, sudden stare,
Half-righteous wrath, and but half a Scare.

It gleamed from the green nest interweaved
In the shade of the branches verdant-leaved
And it said, as verily I believed :

Seek as thou wilt ; these are mine
Nought but my love did intertwine,
This nest from the boughs of the Jessamine.

And I am God's. This garden fair
You say is yours. Yet nowhere here
Does your mind, or your handiwork appear.

Go, therefore, go ; nor dare to pry
With a silly, or sacrilegious eye
Behind the veil of my sanctuary.

And I obeyed. And to this day
What were the eyes that gleamed so gray,
Serpent's or bird's, I cannot say.

FANTASIES—V

We glide from out the mists of Time,
Far, far away the fog-bells' chime
Seems through the sounds of seas to climb.

And farther, farther, farther going,
Into the sunset faintly glowing,
From Ocean into Ocean flowing.

Over the seas as smooth as glass,
Mirror's unflecked, we swiftly pass,
The treasures of the deep amass.

Not in its ooze of pearls and gold
The great, grey seas in their depths enfold
Sought in the old by mariners bold.

But in glorious daydreams that ever come
When sky, and sea, and lips are dumb
And the albatross comes wheeling home.

And never a sailor turns to mind
The lay, low line of shore behind
Where dwell the squirming human-kind.

Now, in the teeth of a wintry gale,
Blind with lightning, and cut with hail,
For ever and ever we onward sail.

Or, under the shadowy, tropic line
Shadowless, burnt, we dream and pine,
Over purple seas, under skies benign.

FANTASIES

On the dreamy, level, passionless seas,
Uncleft by storm, unkissed by breeze,
Unnursed by the night-wind's litanies.

And the great, red stars hang trembling down,
Red as a martyr's ruby crown,
Or seas that the purple sunsets drown.

But farther, farther, farther going,
From Ocean into Ocean flowing,
Space and our Souls together growing.

Vaster and vaster as on we go,
From shadowless line to the Arctic flow,
From the blinding sun to the blinding snow.

We break through the far horizon-line,
With a force, half-human, half-divine,
And we strain for a far, prophetic sign.

That our journey ends on a phantom shore,
Where lisps no wave, and no tempests roar,
But there is a silence for evermore.

For, out of the mists of Time we glide,
And an ocean gleams on every side,
And it is the tranquil eventide.

Yet, a sign comes never. We onward fly,
Till our soul and God, and our sea and sky
Blend in the night of Eternity.

But when? No mortal may ever tell.
Hark! There is the sound of the lighthouse bell!
Ere the dusk has vanished, the midnight fell!

CAMILLA

Fair she was : but proud as fair
Pallas eyes and Nereid hair,
But sweet as fair and proud.
So sweet, men said, so fair a flower,
'Twas only Heaven could claim the dower
Of one so well endowed.

True forecast, though sad prophecy,
She drew from life its ecstasy
Too swift, too sweet, to last
For mark you, Heaven has never lent.

Her soul leaped upwards to the Spirit
Fearless, as one would fain inherit
The priceless heirlooms of the sky.
As a bird shivering pours about
His raptures to the swooping cloud
That covets all his melody.

VIGNETTE

Grinding of seas on sands,
Moaning of winds in the pines
Fading of sunlit sails
O'er the horizon lines.
Fear-drawn faces of women,
Fear-set eyes of men,
This, the vision that's girt
In the circle of life,
And then——?

EPITAPH

Gaze not, O Stranger, with too curious eye.
Thou who art hostile, pass in silence by.
Friend, grant the tribute of a pleading tear
Or benison on him who sleepeth here !

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